

**Needham Human Rights Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**11/18/2021**  
**7:30 PM - 9:00 PM**

**Present:** Cynthia Ganung, Bud Schram, Julie Venables, Marlene Schultz, Myles Tucker, Tina Burgos, Kerry Hurwitch, Amelia Klein, Jen Howard Schroder

**Absent:** Belinda Carroll

**Public Participation** - Rinaz Mala was present to listen and participate.

**Approval of Minutes from 10/21/21** - Bud Schram moved to approve minutes as edited, Marlene Schultz seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Myles Tucker introduction** – Myles is the new Support Services Manager in Needham, and will be working with committee chairs to help fill vacant seats across town committees.

**Community Education Event** - There are many commitments that NHRC has been working on and Jen Howard Schroder propose that it might be a good time for the NHRC to own a new educational program rather than co-sponsoring others' events.

One potential topic that Jen proposed is shedding light on Critical Race Theory. There was a question on whether this would be beneficial for the town or create any issues. Many committee members agreed this is a good idea, however we need to decide the most effective format.

Jen elaborated that maybe the event is specifically education-focused rather than a community conversation, which makes it logistically a simpler event to plan but is helpful in demystifying. Tina suggested perhaps there's a Q&A that is submitted in advanced so that there is a conversational feel without the added layer of breakout sessions, etc. Bud volunteered to look up some speakers that may be appropriate for this type of event. Cynthia Ganung suggested that perhaps there is a panel of voices speaking to CRT vs. just one expert, for example a parent or clergy-person could round out the event. Jen will reach out to the REAL coalition to see if they have any ideas on how to proceed with this event.

Amelia Klein and Julie Venables discussed the idea of a call for questions prior to the event, and making the question to the public very general. Jen suggested maybe the education needs to come before those types of questions. Rinaz Mala volunteered to share her personal stories with hurtful remarks towards her children for this program. Marlene suggested a subcommittee could work on the planning for this event. Bud and Jen volunteered to lead the subcommittee.

Cynthia also had an idea for an educational event about helping Afghan refugees, especially given that there are groups in the Needham community supporting local refugees. The committee discussed that perhaps this could be a bigger program that touches on more than

one culture and is an educational program about many cultures. Cynthia said that perhaps the NHRC could be a catalyst to getting many groups involved and have something like “Get to Know Your Neighbor Month” and each group can touch on a different cultural connection. The committee agreed that perhaps at this time the best idea is to keep brainstorming and hold this event in person as it may be more impactful that way.

**Calendar of Events (2022)** - Tina would like to circulate a shared document to keep track of holidays, days of remembrance, etc. that will be important in 2022. Then, the committee can decide how we want to mark these days - an event, community outreach, helping to cross-promote other organizations their events on those days.

The committee agreed that it would be helpful to keep track of other groups’ events, our commitments to the degree that we are helping out with various events, and to what extent we might want to plan our own events.

**MLK Day Event** - Cynthia wanted to flag in advance we need to decide how we want to participate in the NDI’s MLK Jr. event. NHRC has co-sponsored for the past several years in the form of helping with logistics, and making a statement.

The committee will begin to think about what form our support will take this year. This event will be virtual in 2022. Cynthia suggested that if the discrimination complaint process is far enough along, we share information at that time of how to use the process. The committee will continue to think about ways to contribute and share via email or a shared document by the first week in December.

**NDI Summit Recap** - Amelia provided a summary of the NDI “Voices in Unity” program that was held on November 14, 2021. The conversations were interesting and the keynote speakers was very powerful. Attendance was a bit lower than NDI had hoped. Marlene commented that the program was very engaging even given the Zoom format. Kerry said the program was extremely well done and enjoyable but perhaps the length of the program was a bit too long given the virtual format. The committee agreed that Tina’s piece at the program was very genuine and well done.

**Community Conversations on Race** - Tina updated the committee that the group has definitively landed on the topic of policing for this series of events. The group putting the event together is being extremely deliberate in planning to ensure no one is put in an uncomfortable spot during the events. The events may include history of policing in America, history of policing in Needham, systemic racism, and potentially small group conversations. Jen shared the concern that the framework may not meet the needs of all who have been asking for these type of events. It is difficult to make sure that all of the stakeholders needs are being met given the sensitive subject that these events touches on. The planning committee is going to meet again in early December.

**Discrimination Complaint Process** - The subcommittee is waiting to meet with the Select Board chairs and present where the process ideas stand. This meeting should occur soon.

**Administrative Up Keep -**

- Vacant seats - Interviews will begin soon, so the open NHRC seats should be filled by the end of the year.
- Minute takers - The survey went out to the committee so that everyone can sign up for a month to take minutes.

**Announcements** - Several interesting upcoming events in November.

11/20/21: Trans Day of Remembrance

11/21/21: Virtual interfaith Thanksgiving

1/23/22: At My Neighbors Table: Empowering Yourself to Have Challenging Conversations

12/7/21: Please vote to replace the empty Select Board seat

Marlene moved to adjourn the meeting, Bud seconded the motion.

Meeting minutes recorded by Julie Venables.

Next meeting to be held on December 16, 2021.